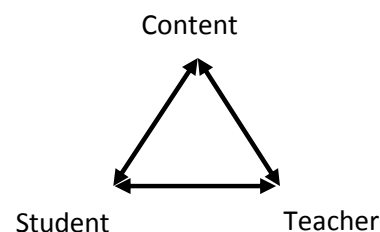


Overview of 'Instructional Rounds in Education: A Network Approach to Improving Teaching and Learning'



Instructional Core = teachers and students working together in the presence of content.



Seven Principles of the Instructional Core

1. Increases in student learning occur only as a consequence of improvements in the level of content, teachers' knowledge and skill, and student engagement.
2. If you change any single element of the instructional core, you have to change the other two.
3. If you can't see it in the core, it's not there.
4. Task predicts performance.
5. The real accountability system is in the tasks that students are asked to do.
6. We learn to do the work *by doing the work*, *not* by telling other people to do the work, *not* by having done the work at some time in the past, and *not* by hiring experts who can act as proxies for our knowledge about how to do the work.
7. Description before analysis, analysis before prediction, prediction before evaluation.

Theory of Action = "if we do **X** activity or approach, then we are likely to get **Y** outcome".

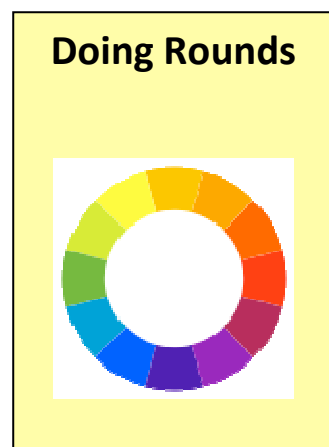
A theory of action is a set of causal connections, usually in the if-then form that serves as a story line that connects broad visions with the more specific strategies used to improve the instructional core.

Key points:

- A well-worked strategy in one domain may not work equally well in another.
- In Rounds the development of theories of action should be modelled as a process of serial learning over time.
- A simple and incomplete theory is better than no theory at all.
- Strong norms of confidentiality and candour make collegial discussion of theories of action more powerful.
- The theory of action can cut through the clutter to the instructional core.
- Share your theory of action inside and outside your organisation.

Three main requirements of a Theory of Action

1. It must begin with a *statement of causal relationship* between what I do – in my role as a Regional Network Leader, principal, teacher, coach etc. – and what constitutes a good result in the classroom.
2. It must be *empirically falsifiable*; that is, I must be able to disqualify all or parts of the theory as a useful guide to action that is based on evidence of what occurs as a consequence of my actions.
3. It must be *open ended*; that is, it must prompt me to further revise and specify the causal relationships I initially identified as I learn more about the consequences of my actions.



Rounds is a special kind of 'walkthrough', a special kind of 'network', and a special kind of 'improvement strategy' integrated into one practice.

The Four Elements of Rounds:

1. Identifying a problem of practice.
2. Observing.
3. Debriefing.
4. Focusing on the next level of work.

A picture of Rounds:

- A network convenes in a school for Rounds visit hosted by a member or members of the network.
- The network divides into smaller groups and visits a rotation of four or five classrooms for approximately 20 minutes each.
- Network participants write down what they see and hear, gathering descriptive evidence related to the problem of practice.
- After observations, the entire group assembles in a common location for a debriefing.
- In the debriefing, participants work through a process of description, analysis and prediction.
- Share observations in groups, capturing a body of evidence on the problem of practice, analysing the evidence for patterns.
- Finally the network discusses the next level of work, recommendations for the school and system to make progress on the problem of practice.

**At the heart of Rounds is dialogue*

The Whole Process of Rounds

1. Launching a network.
2. Learning to see, unlearning to judge.
3. Doing Rounds:
 - a. Problem of practice and observing.
 - b. Debriefing and the next level of work.
4. Facilitating Rounds.

Description of Rounds Process

1. Launching Rounds:

1. Convene the network.
2. Muster and manage the resources.
3. Develop initial expectations and norms.

Key Points:

- Think about how you will design the mechanisms that facilitate continuous learning.
- Encourage public learners.
- Network functioning and learning needs to be tuned to improvement efforts.
- It's not what you do, but how you do it that matters.
- Allow the network to do the work.

2. Learning to See, Unlearning to Judge

Key Points

- Deciding in advance *what* to observe, *how* to observe, and most importantly, *how to talk about what is seen*.
- Emphasis on being descriptive and collecting "judgement-free" evidence (the *Ladder of Inference* is very helpful).
- Judgement words are conversation stoppers (e.g. good, great, weak, bad).
- **Three key questions rooted in the instructional core:**
 1. What are teachers doing and saying?
 2. What are students doing and saying?
 3. What is the task?

3. Doing Rounds:

a. Problem of Practice and Observing

The Problem of Practice:

- Focuses on instructional core.
- Is directly observable.
- Is actionable.
- Connects to a broader strategy of improvement.
- Is high-leverage.

Observations should be:

- Descriptive not evaluative.
 - Specific.
 - About the instructional core.
 - Related to the problem of practice.
- *Focus on what the students are actually doing.*
***Task predicts performance.*

3. Doing Rounds:

b. Debriefing and the Next Level of Work

Observation Debrief in teams discuss data:

- Describe what you saw.
- Analyse the descriptive evidence.
- Predict what students are learning.

The next level of work:

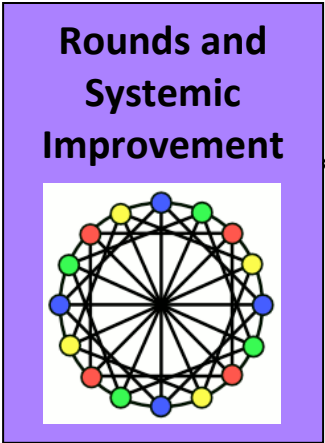
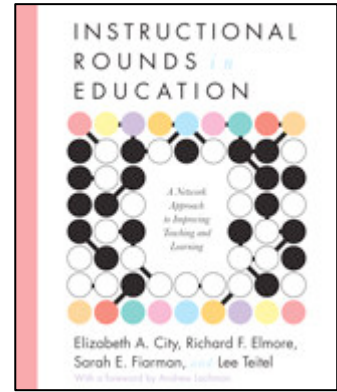
- Share regional level theory of action.
- Share resources, professional development and current initiatives.
- Brainstorm the next level of work by week/month/end of year.

**Link description, analysis, prediction and the next level of work.*
***Talk about what follow-up happens outside the network.*

4. Facilitating Rounds:

Facilitators:

- Maximize network learning through careful planning and targeted professional development.
 - Focus on the four elements of Rounds.
 - Listen and guide learning.
 - Cultivate the network (set norms).
 - Model the work and are explicit.
 - Acknowledge individuals have different needs and preferences.
 - Guide through questions not answers.
 - Focus network on descriptive evidence.
- *Co-facilitation works well (facilitators can be internal or external depending on network).*
***Less is more.*



Overview of 'Instructional Rounds in Education: A Network Approach to Improving Teaching and Learning'

Learning from Rounds = bridging the practice of "Doing Rounds" to Systemic Improvement.

Key Strategies:

- Move learning in schools and school systems from individual to collective.
- Focus on descriptive voice to separate people and practice.
- Develop a common language and set norms to cultivate trust.
- Build efficacy through repeated practice of instructional Rounds.
- Encourage the network to question.

The Five Principles of Learning from Rounds

1. We learn to do the work by doing the work, reflecting on the work and critiquing the work.
2. Separate the person from the practice.
3. Learning is an individual and a collective activity.
4. Trust enhances individual and collective learning.
5. Learning enhances individual collective efficacy.

**the learning theory of Rounds allows networks to link the practice of Rounds, including the theory of action to how Rounds lead to systemic improvement.*

Moving from Rounds to Large-Scale Improvements in Practice = ideas and experiences of Rounds – the focus on the instructional core; the building of a collaborative learning culture; and the use of ideas like a theory of action to strategically focus improvement efforts – all have to become central to the core work of the school, network, region and system.

Key Points:

- Problems of practice are drawn from improvement strategies.
- The Rounds process focuses on those problems of practice.
- Evidence analysis and dialogue from the Rounds process inform both short- and longer- term plans for improvement at scale.
- Encourage the network to question.

Bringing instructional improvement to scale through:

- Developing a clearly articulated and collective understanding of what high-quality teaching and learning looks like.
- Building a collaborative learning culture.
- Developing and implementing coherent system wide strategies that support high-quality instructional practice in all classrooms.

Preconditions for achieving large-scale instructional improvement:

- The instructional core must become *the* work of educators.
- Involve the right people initially and recruit more and more people over time.
- Provide explicit expectations for individual, group and system learning and follow-up applications.
- Expect the network to learn over time.
- Expect new forms of accountability to develop.

Instructional Rounds is most effective as an accelerant to systemic improvement **when it moves** from being an additional activity **to being the work.**

Instructional Rounds is a means of moving education from a collection of more or less independent practitioners to a profession with:

- A shared set of practices.
- A body of collective knowledge.
- A set of mutual commitments that define professional accountability.

